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GRANTA.

GRANTA:

OR,

A PAGE FROM THE LIFE OF A CANTAB.

SECOND EDITION,

WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONS.

"She loved not wisely but too well."

"These are the errors, and these the fruits, of mispending our prime youth at the Schools and Universities, as we do, either in learning mere words, or such things, chiefly, as were better unlearned."

MILTON.

D'Arcy Gordon Osborne

LONDON:

EDWARD BULL, 19, HOLLES STREET.

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TO THE
HON. G. GODOLPHIN OSBORNE,

THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED,
AS A TOKEN, TRIFLING BUT, SINCERE,
OF THEIR AUTHOR'S AFFECTION.

London, Dec. 1, 1837.

GRANTA,

&c.

I.

“FAREWELL to Granta, and its time worn towers,

“The chosen site of science and of truth ;

“Where glided once, in, ah ! too fleeting hours,

“The careless current of my happy youth !

“Oft in its grassy paths I’ve pensive strayed,

“Rapt in the precepts of some ancient sage ;

“Oft, stretched at ease beneath its verdant shade,

“Pondered attentive o’er th’historic page !

B

II.

“ Ah, well I recollect when first began,
“ Granta ! within thy walls my young career ;
“ Fresh from my childhood’s home, scarce yet a man,
“ I viewed each object with a holy fear !
“ Strange to my inexperience all things seemed,
“ Each sight, each sound, now known, alas ! too well,
“ And something more than earthly then I deemed
“ The snow-white surplice, and the chapel bell !

III.

“ Would that those happy days could dawn again !
“ Oh for that blest, that unforgotten time,
“ When leapt my young heart, free from care or pain,
“ Unscathed by passion, undefiled by crime !
“ Though hardened now my breast to deeds of sin,
“ Of every lawless passion the abode,
“ Yet fain would I life’s course once more begin,
“ And turn from Satan’s paths to those of God.

IV.

“How sharp the pang of recollection’s sting,
“When conscience lends her aid to barb the dart;
“When mem’ry and remorse together bring
“Their thousand horrors to assail the heart !
“Each talent wasted, and each hour mispent,
“Each warning scorned, each ill-requited care,
“Rise like the spectral forms in Richard’s tent,
“And yield the trembling sinner to despair !

V.

“Vain, too, each effort, vain each spell of earth,
“To choke with flowers the piercing thorns of sin ;
“Vain the attempt to crush, in boisterous mirth,
“The never-dying worm that gnaws within !
“Conscience, o’erthrown, still rears its giant head,
“And doubly strong, Antæus-like, springs up ;
“The fiend still greets us in the wanton’s bed,
“And rises sneering from the drunkard’s cup.”

VI.

Thus spoke the Student, as he slowly turned
To leave for ever the familiar scene,
Where once within his bosom deep had burned
Ambition's torch, and emulation keen ;
Where hope once shadowed out a glorious lot,
An honoured life of happiness and fame,
And smiling visions (scarcely yet forgot)
Diffused a halo round his humble name.

VII.

Edward was sprung from pure and gentle blood,
The cherished offspring of a worthy pair;
His sire—a village pastor, poor, but good—
Espoused in youth a maid not rich—but fair :
One only son and daughter formed the ties
Which knit yet closer the old couple's love ;
The aged man had nothing else to prize
Except his flock below, and God above.

VIII.

And well deserving of the utmost zeal
A parent's fond idolatry can show,
The tender cares which only parents feel,
The anxious fears which only parents know,
Was that sweet girl, whose smile serenely bright,
Shone with affection's soft celestial ray,
To glad their aged hearts with its pure light,
And guide their footsteps o'er their weary way.

IX.

Yes, she was pure—if ever yet was given
To mortals purity, that gift was her's ;
Upon her glorious brow the God of heaven
Had set his seal in glowing characters !
Yet simple was she, for she knew no guile,
Her innate virtue was her sole defence ;
Her only weapon was her virgin smile,
Her only buckler was her innocence.

X.

Beauteous was she—in form, no less than mind,
Like some rapt poet's dreams divinely fair ;
Sweetly she smiled, as blushing she would bind
The rebel ringlets of her auburn hair.
To wond'ring minds her guardian sprite might seem,
From the bright regions of the cloudless sky,
(Prometheus-like) to have stol'n the azure beam,
And plundered Heaven to light her soft blue eye.

XI.

Her name was Isabel, and she had seen
Just sixteen summers wing their sunny flight
O'er her young head ; her life had ever been
One clear unruffled stream of calm delight.
To her the world was yet an unread page,
(A page how blotted with unnumbered tears !)
Her's was the task to cheer the pastor's age,
And smooth the pillow of declining years.

XII.

Next to the place which filial love possessed,
Lived her young brother in the maiden's heart,
He was the worshipp'd image of her breast,
Of her own being, life, and soul a part :
No lynx's eye so keen as her's to find
The claims his wayward nature had to praise ;
No eye as her's so resolutely blind
To every speck that dimmed his virtue's rays.

XIII.

He was her idol !—like th' Assyrian king
She had “set up an image of pure gold,”
To whose resplendent form was made to cling
No baser metal of inferior mould ;
No doubts her fond devotion would allow,
Affection's faith bestowed a shape divine,
And taught each feeling and each thought to bow
In prostrate adoration at the shrine.

XIV.

Proud were the parents of their only son,
And deemed his talents of a stamp most rare :
Countless the visions which they built upon
The future fame of him, their dearest care !
Long had such joyous hopes their feelings fed,
Long had the pastor and his worthy dame
Hoarded their scanty store, that he might tread
The paths of Granta, and, they hoped, of fame.

XV.

In sooth, 'tis wondrous how parental pride
Obscures the judgment, and affects the sight ;
The slightest talent in the boy espied
Fills the old people with insane delight ;
When once he's gone, 'twere worth a heavy bet
That the fond mother and the doating sire
Feel sure of reading, in the next Gazette,
Their darling youth has set the Cam on fire !

XVI.

Not *many* a child these prophecies fulfils—

Prizes are scarce, and scholarships still more.

But yet there's always a supply of bills

To make the parent's purse and temper sore ;
Their name is " Legion," and they never cease

Till, driven half mad by each successive dun,
(The modern Jasons of a modern *fleece*,)

He d—ns the hour he got a clever son.

XVII.

Perils unnumbered on the tyro wait,

Temptation woos him in a thousand shapes,
Pleasure and licence lure him to his fate,

And virtue has some pretty near escapes !
Youth's venial follies, prudence well may brook,

Experience mostly will correct the evil ;
But there are some one really *can't* o'erlook—

Dice, drabs, and drinking, play the very devil.

XVIII.

Yet of amusements one may find a few
'Mongst "Alma Mater's" very learned race,
Which, though their folly one may smiling view;
Still do not lead to mischief or disgrace.
For instance, there's "The Union," where a crowd
Of youthful politicians "bravos" win
By talking nonsense fluently and loud
In the hir'd forum of a Cambridge inn.

XIX.

There Whig and Tory with tumultuous cries
Swell the fierce clamour of the uproarious den;
In turns you see the stripling speakers rise,—
How ludicrous a parody on men!
The factions of the circus, green and blue,
Which filled Constantinople with affright,
And which Justinian scarcely could subdue,
Were a less noisy, though more awful sight.

XX.

Of their "loved king, church, laws, and country's home
And constitution," they unceasing prate ;
And like the foolish birds which rescued Rome,
They think their cackling will preserve the state.
Before they count on such a strong effect,
I would advise these heroes of the gown
To pause a little, and to recollect
That full grown geese, not *goslings*, saved the town.

XXI.

Study to some attraction doth not lack,
But even there will disappointment lie,—
Examiners have not the happy knack
Of viewing talents with a parent's eye ;
Genius, pronounced divine by partial friends,
Alas ! too often, by some grievous luck,
After three years of " Alma Mater," ends
" In wooden spoon in ' gulphing ' or in ' pluck. ' "

XXII.

A truce to these digressions ;—now had come
The destined time for Edward to depart,
To leave for Granta's walls his parent's home,
And train fresh ties to twine around his heart.
Not all unmixed with bitterness, that hour—
Each well-known face grew dearer than before,
Each humble object gained redoubled power,
When months must pass, ere he should see them more.

XXIII.

It is no trifling change that moment brings,
That revolution of our nature—when
We “put away,” at last, all “childish things,”
And claim the passions and the cares of men ;
The robe of manhood, which, with ardent gaze,
And eager longings, our young eyes behold,
Oft, like the Centaur's fabled gift, betrays—
And hides destruction in each graceful fold.

XXIV.

The parting, like all partings of the sort,
Was fond and melancholy in th' extreme ;
Yet not all melancholy, for a thought
Of future meetings, like a sunny beam,
Would shoot across the gloom. There was no want
Of pious precepts, warnings against sin,
And all the good old venerable cant
Which anxious parents vent their feelings in.

XXV.

A Bible, Prayer-book, tracts, some half-a-score,
All with religion and sound doctrine rife,
His mother gave, and added to the store,
“ Advice to Young Men entering upon life ;”
Also his father's very last discourse,
(The text that well known one of “ Sheep and Goats,”)
And last, not least, an argument of force,
A pair of neatly-folded ten-pound notes.

XXVI.

The father gave his blessing and a purse,
And very properly, without the last
The first is thought no better than a curse;
But both together cannot be surpassed
In efficacy; for when they're combined,
Each gives the memory a gentle lash,
And the forgotten blessing's called to mind
By the sweet tingle of the welcome cash.

XXVII.

The old man blessed his son, and you might spy
The parent's feelings struggling to appear;
There was a moisture in his aged eye
Which fortitude forbade to be a tear.
The blessing given, with calm and saddened mien,
And lingering steps which scarce could turn away,
He slowly left behind the parting scene;
And sought his chamber's solitude—to pray.

XXVIII.

Yet one was left whose feelings, deeply pained,
 Could scarcely bear her through the last farewell,
Whose prayers, how deep ! whose int'rest how unfeigned !
 And (need we ask) that one was Isabel !
But though her sorrow struggled for relief,
 No sob betrayed the anguish of her breast,
She boldly wrestled with her spirit's grief
 As Edward, thus, her parting words addressed.

XXIX.

“Farewell ! it, doubtless, is a painful sound
 For love like our's to utter or to hear ;
A love which hath so intimately bound
 Each thought and feeling of our young career
In harmony ; whose notes were never strung
 To breathe a single strain of jarring strife ;
And at whose bidding, instantaneous, sprung
 A thousand flow'rets in our path of life.

XXX.

“ Our’s was the mystic union of the heart,
The concentration of two souls in one,
Which seem as though they could not breathe apart,
Whose sands of life *must* intermingled run !
Too weak to bear an independent fate,
As the winged captive of the eastern skies,
When colder climes have robbed him of his mate,
Pines, for an hour, in solitude, and dies !

XXXI.

“ Enough of this—it doth not now beseem
To dwell, with vain regret, upon the past ;
It was a fair but evanescent dream,
A vision all too beautiful to last !
Severe reality must now replace
The fleeting fantasies of former days ;
And childhood’s flowers withdraw their winning grace,
And yield to learning’s more congenial bays.

XXXII.

Think, too, how great were her, (thy sister's) pride
To know thee rich in academic fame ;
To know that one by blood and love allied
Had raised to eminence our father's name :
Well would that consciousness each former care,
Each hour of fond solicitude, repay ;
While ev'n thy sister, though denied to share,
Caught from thy glory a reflected ray.

XXXIII.

"Henceforth, 'tis true, our tracks are separate,
Distinct the currents of our life must flow ;
And though, at first, 't may seem a bitter fate,
Yet reason plainly tells it should be so ;
Mine the light skiff that's only form'd to sport
On the smooth waters of life's sunniest shore ;
While thy proud argosy, with treasure fraught,
Must spurn the waves, and dare the tempest's roar.

XXXIV.

“That world, whose hidden realms thy unfledg’d wing
Is soon to visit in its daring flight,
We’re taught to look on as a fearful thing—
A moral chaos, where—too oft—the right
Against the wrong is pow’rless to prevail ;
While in the ceaseless, yet unequal strife,
Religion yields, and virtue’s forces fail,
And honour’s self, unwilling, leaves its life.

XXXV.

“It may be so ! ’tis not for maiden’s skill
On themes like these, presumptuous, to decide ;
To set the boundaries of good and ill :—
But still, methinks, there is a brighter side
To the dark picture ; else we had not seen
Such fair examples in the human race :
Where had the sage, the saint, the hero been,
Had the world’s history been WHOLLY base ?

XXXVI.

"The path is open, and thou must proceed
With resolution on thy bold career ;
Tho' perils threaten, and tho' toils impede,
Thy lot's appointed, and thy way is clear !
To God and conscience look for thy support,
Thy load to lighten, and thy cares to quell,
Next let the absent claim a passing thought ;
And now one last embrace, one look—farewell !"

XXXVII.

'Tis not our purpose to describe the way
Our hero went, nor enters it our plan
To feed vain curiosity, and say
The College where his freshman's course began ;
Whether at Trinity, St. John's, or one
Of lesser note, imports not to be known ;
Let it suffice to hear, his journey done,
He donned, instantèr, th' academic gown.

XXXVIII.

Installed at Granta, 'twas his earliest care
The college Tutor's residence to ask ;
Then to the awful interview repair,
(To freshman's nerves a most stupendous task).
A slight digression must be pardoned here,
While, at our leisure, we dilate upon
So vast a theme ; and give you an idea
('Tis drawn from nature) of the mighty Don !

XXXIX.

A pigmy's stature, but a giant mind,
An aspect insignificant and mean ;
An intellect whose varied stores combined
Learning most recondite, research most keen.
These were his attributes ;—to crown the whole,
He 'd been fifth wrangler, (a superb degree !)
And was engaged at present, heart and soul,
On a new treatise of Geometry.

XL.

The Mathematics were to him his food,
His moral sustenance, his dearest care ;
He deemed the gift of reason only good
To solve a problem, or complete a square :
Each symbol seemed with mystic meaning fraught,
He viewed with awe each algebraic case ;
And, were the truth but known, he doubtless thought
Heav'n was a triangle, and hell its base !

XLI.

Of worldly knowledge he had little part,
His learning was the learning of the school,
But in the science of the human heart
This great philosopher was but a fool !
Engaged in objects beyond mortal ken,
The earth he trod, he scarcely saw at all ;
And hence it happened every now and then,
He got, poor fellow ! an unlucky fall.

XLII.

We said he was a fool in worldly lore,
 (A lot that some might envy him, in truth,)
Yet 't was of this he stood in need the more,
 Since he'd to curb the will of headstrong youth.
And there his lamentable failure showed,
 Of men and manners ignorance so vast,
'Twas clear (whate'er he'd done in Euclid's road)
 The "*Ass's Bridge*" of *life* he had not pass'd !

XLIII.

'Tis plainly, one of Nature's wisest ends,
 That youth's high spirits should obtain a vent—
Whether in good or evil, much depends
 On skilful guidance, and the nature's bent.
Misplaced severity too often chills
 The warm outpourings of a buoyant heart ;
Nips the free impulse in the bud, and kills
 Of dawning life the best and brightest part.

XLIV.

On various natures, various the effect,
And marked the difference the sequel shows ;
Some, their aspirings prematurely checked,
Sink down at once in indolent repose.
Others, whose fiery passions had been tame,
Would wise indulgence but have ruled their force,
Burst in a wild ungovernable flame,
And bear down Virtue's barriers in their course.

XLV.

Our worthy tutor was not quite the man
To grapple with so delicate a trust;
His discipline was framed upon a plan
Often more mathematical than just.
He was a mighty one for forms,—and there
The slightest lapse he deemed a grave offence ;
Gates, lectures, chapels, were his chiefest care,
Morality he left to Providence.

XLVI.

Yet to compassion's side he'd never lean,
But punish'd strictly every moral scrape,
When once discovered, as if it had been
Some awful case of murder or of rape.
Some viewed his reverence with exceeding fear,
And some with great contempt, but none with love,
Though as a serpent wise, 'twas very clear
His nature'd devilish little of the dove.

XLVII.

He was inflexible in punishment,
And passed each sentence with apparent joy;
He rusticated—to a great extent,
And, much too oft, expulsion would employ.
Yet even then 'twas said that you might note
His ruling passion:—there's a tale that he
To some youth's father, in this manner wrote,
“Your son's expelled the college. Q. E. D.”

XLVIII.

He was a well-intentioned man in fact,
Although his head would lead his heart astray ;
He was not gifted with sufficient tact
To guide the steps of youth a proper way.
He lacked discernment, and was somewhat blind
To note each character's distinctive mark,
To catch the finer traits of each young mind,
The good and bad, the brilliant and the dark.

XLIX.

Such was the Tutor, and no further share,
In this, our page, to claim must he presume ;
We'll merely add—he was (most tutors are)
The Dagon of the Combination-room :
A room so called since every night in it
The college luminaries all *combine*
To crack their nuts, applaud each other's wit,
And drink a quantity of bad port wine.

C

L.

Then as the muddy liquor they gulp down
 (For strength not flavour, in their port they buy)
The tittle tattle of their dirty town,
 Their interesting topics doth supply.
At some old hacknied tale, or well worn jest,
 Each gown'd Joe Miller laughs himself to fits :
For little things, and little pastimes best
 Suit the calibre of their little wits.

LI.

Some would-be Nimrod, tells with eager breath,
 The glorious perils of a stirring chase,
And paints the triumphs of the fox's death,
 Though, heaven knows, he was never near the place !
Another boasts the talents of some youth,
 A private pupil of his own, and one,
Whom, he takes money to instruct, forsooth,
 In things of which himself he knoweth none.

LII.

Thus go they on in harmless foolish lies,
Each striving which the other can excel,
Till the wise conclave is compelled to rise,
By the dread summons of the chapel bell.
Each with his surplice puts on a grave air,
And looks of sanctity the very pink,
'Then off they stagger to the house of prayer,
Full of devotion,—fuller still of drink.

LIII.

We have heard something once or twice of late,
Of some intention to reform and change
The laws of Alma Mater and her state,
Which are 'tis owned, at present rather strange.
But dire hath been the clamour and the noise
Raised by the monks 'gainst innovation's fang,
And on the Whigs hath poured from Dons and boys
The varied elegance of learned slang.

LIV.

So when the master of a fair domain,
Resolves t' expel some useless race of rooks,
Whose breed have had an immemorial reign—
From the fair shelter of their verdant nooks,
In loud and angry cawings, the black swarm
Of filthy creatures vent their wrath and woe,
And testify their terror of "Reform,"
By dropping dirt on people's heads below !

LV.

'Twould be a noble, but an arduous task,
To drive the lazy mass of birds away,
Which have been suffered far too long to bask
On Alma Mater's breast in pleasure's ray.
Would it not vie with Herculean feats,
'Gainst lawless robbers or detested beasts,
To sweep from learning's desecrated seats,
Fox-hunting fellows, and port-bibbing priests ?

LVI.

In meditation deep his reverence sate,
Both hands supporting his right learned head,
Which then was working at a rapid rate ;
Around him on his writing desk were spread,
Six Algebras, four Euclids, and a Locke.
Such was the sight his eyes encountered, when
Edward (preluding with a gentle knock),
Like Daniel, stood within the lion's den.

LVII.

Roused by the interruption, with a frown,
The angry Tutor started to his feet ;
But recognizing, at a glance, the gown,
He motioned the intruder to a seat.
Edward made known his errand, and his name,
Then paused, and not a sound the silence broke ;
Till forth, at last, the wished-for answer came—
The great man blandly smiled, and smiling spoke.

LVIII.

"It gives me pleasure, sir, to see you here—

I know your father, and I hope to see
The same good qualities in you appear

Which he has shown, through life, so constantly.
Cambridge is somewhat of a ticklish place
For youth, at first ; but caution will suffice,
I trust, to keep you out of all disgrace,
As I shall aid you with my best advice.

LIX.

"There is one thing I must beg leave to call

Your best attention to, as it is one
The first and most important of them all,
And which by no means must be left undone ;—
I mean a strict attendance, every day,
On college lectures, which I think you'll find
(Though I am saying it who should not say)
Of great advantage to assist your mind.

LX.

"In mathematics 'tis my pleasing task
 'To teach the young idea how to shoot,'
And answer any question you may ask
 In unknown numbers, fractions, or square root.
Euclid and Algebra, alternate, claim
 Your daily notice (such the college rule),
And Gerund (that's my brother lecturer's name)
 You'll find in classics, I'll engage, no fool.

LXI.

"In chapel your attendance must be strict—
 Eight times a week is just the freshman's share,
Which, if neglected, I must needs inflict
 Such punishment as you'll find hard to bear.
Our gates are closed at ten, and I request
 You'll not be later than an hour beyond;
Nor spend the period of allotted rest
 In idle follies, of which some are fond.

LXII.

“ 'Tis fitting, too, and shows a proper sense
Of just economy, to dine in hall ;
For private dinners are a great expense,
And college cooks the pocket sadly maul.
Such are the points that seem, my dear young friend,
At first most requisite for you to know :
And now my long discourse must have an end,
As I've no more to say—so you may go.”

LXIII.

Thus, then, the formidable visit passed,
The Tutor quietly resumed his book ;
And Edward, suffered to depart at last,
Eased of a mighty load, his farewell took ;
Feeling, no doubt, as does some guilty soul,
Which, all its wickedness at length forgiven,
And doomed in flames of fire no more to roll,
Gets out of purgatory into heav'n.

LXIV.

Since his arrival, several weeks had flown,
With no event of much importance rife,
And Edward now had gradually grown
Somewhat accustomed to a college life.
His circle of acquaintance was but small,
He shunned a larger, as some freshmen do ;
Yet he'd his set of friends, and, of them all,
We shall describe particularly two.

LXV.

Both were of older standing, and the one
Was drawing nigh the close of his career ;
His course of study he had nearly run ;
And those who marked his pallid cheek might fear,
And fear with reason, that the spirit's strife
In that worn frame not long was doomed to last :
Excitement still kept in the spark of life,
A spark whose brilliancy was waning fast.

LXVI.

He, from the outset, with unflagging zeal,
The loftiest paths of Science had pursued,
Of all her mysteries had unclosed the seal,
Till even Science owned herself subdued ;
Yet had the body suffered for the mind,
The sword was fairly wearing out the sheath ;
And with the laurel-crown was intertwined
The consecrated cypress-branch of death.

LXVII.

Him did the Tutors reverently view,
As one whose future triumphs were to crown
(For honours with them were, alas ! but few)
The college with unparallel'd renown.
It tickled much their vanity, the thought
That one, at least, amongst them would be known,
Whose glory might, in widely spread report,
For many a pluck and wooden spoon atone.

LXVIII.

They used all means to fire his ardent soul,
To rouse his spirit and excite his pride ;
They left, in spurring to the fatal goal,
No string untouched, no artifice untried ;
They, in their mad concupiscence of fame,
Wasted no thought upon its object's doom ;
To them 'twas nothing, if the wrangler's name
Would only serve to decorate his tomb.

LXIX.

He to our hero had been pointed out,
By Plane the tutor, as a fitting friend,
Whose councils might be heard without a doubt,
As always tending to some proper end.
Edward still heard his praises, day by day,
As one whose rare example should inspire
His latent energies, and guide his way,
As did the Jews the pillar of God's fire.

LXX.

A slight acquaintance had at first been formed,
Then, by degrees, some intimacy came,
Till, as their hearts towards each other warmed,
Acquaintance ripened into friendship's flame.
Each day that passed their natures closer bound,
With some invisible but strong cement ;
"The one thing needful," each in th' other found,
Both young, both eager, yet how different !

LXXI.

Edward's affection was a kind of awe,
Of admiration and of love combined ;
His eyes were dazzled, and but dimly saw
The mighty workings of that master-mind.
While oft the well-worn page would Harvey close,
Suffer his wearied spirit to unbend,
And snatch a brief, but ah ! how sweet repose,
In the untutor'd love of his young friend.

LXXII.

In far a different mould was Vincent cast,
Science held no dominion in his breast :
He knew that youth would not for ever last,
And snatched its short-lived joys with double zest.
Wild leapt his young blood, and the path he trod,
Through all the mazes of enjoyment ran ;
Nor for the mighty empire of a God,
Would he have barter'd the delights of man !

LXXIII.

He was a libertine—a clever one,
But yet a libertine whose very sight
Struck all the saints with horror,—he had won
Full many a trophy in debauchery's fight.
Old women viewed him with suspicious dread,—
Not so the young ones, or they're much belied ,
He rarely slept within his college bed,
And Barnwell hailed him with a mother's pride.

LXXIV.

Yet it were well had he confined his sport
To that preserve of prostitution's game,
Nor changed caresses bargained for and bought,
For others purchased by a maiden's shame.
Those chartered syrens, by profession kind,
Stood at his beck,—he had but to demand ;
But, sooth to say, he often felt inclined
To deal a little in the contraband.

LXXV.

He was a "fisher," like the saint of old,
But not of "men," alas ! and it was said,
His fine-wrought nets were skilful to enfold
Within their meshes many a hapless maid.
He thought no stratagem could be unfair,
Whereby possession's bliss he might enjoy ;
Yet played with woman's love, as if it were,
When once obtained, an almost worthless toy.

LXXVI.

He was extravagant in all he did—

His wines were faultless, and superb each feast
He gave. The tutors would have gladly rid
The college of so turbulent a guest ;
But in his purse their menials viewed such charms,
The measure had been perilous to try,
Lest Cook and Butler should rise up in arms,
And scullions wave their caps in mutiny.

LXXVII.

Edward was slightly intimate with him—

An intimacy with great peril rife,
For Vincent had begun, in wanton whim,
To initiate the "Freshman" into LIFE.
As January, too, was drawing near,
Harvey was too intent on his degree,
By counsel to instil a wholesome fear,
And aid his friend's too weak morality.

LXXVIII.

This said morality, we 're loth to say,
Had lately been extremely on the wane ;
And Edward was proceeding in a way,
Which caused some umbrage to the worthy Plane.
'Tis true, he had not caught him, hitherto,
In any overt act of serious vice ;
But yet, one morning, he 'd come in at two,
And missed a Sunday-chapel once or twice.

LXXIX.

The term was over, and a great relief
The Freshmen found their six-weeks' holiday :
Some hurried home, to eat their Christmas beef,
And some, of whom was Edward, chose to stay.
His home was distant, so he wrote a line
To say he 'd stopped to read " Trig'nometry ;"
If true, the motive had been very fine,
But candour bids us own it was a lie.

LXXX.

And now arrived, in all its awful state,
The examination for "B.A. degree;"
And you might see at every college-gate
Of pallid youths a vast variety.
Here were Examiners, who, pompous, walked
With piles of papers underneath each arm;
And there EXAMINEES in whispers talked
Of the next subject—with extreme alarm!

LXXXI.

"That was a horrid paper," mutters one.
"They never set so stiff an one before,"
Exclaims another; "how much have you done?"
"Oh, pretty fair—I think I sent up four;"
"Oh! I did ten, but four of them were wrong,
And three, my Tutor says, not perfect quite;
And one I wrote too short, and one too long—
But *one*, thank God! I know's completely right."

LXXXII.

At length the long expected period passed,
Hundreds of bosoms throbbed with hope and fear;
And bets were thick of who'd be first—who last,
Who would be plucked outright—who very near.
Some swore they did not care a single curse,
“Not they,—a man must be a fool to funk;
Whilst others, whose performance had been worse,
Consoled themselves—by getting very drunk.

LXXXIII.

The lists came out, and Harvey's name was there
As Senior Wrangler; and as he alone
Concerns our story, what the others were,
It is not requisite we should make known.
Most thought themselves excessively ill used,
And grudged the sums they'd paid for being crammed;
All the examiners were much abused,
And H—rs got particularly d—d.

LXXXIV.

Next day there was a mighty deal to do,
Being the day of taking of degrees;
A time much counted on—with reason too,
Since dons and bed-makers then sacked their fees.
It seems incredible that men, full grown,
Should still so hanker after “childish things;”
Should read so much, and *pay*—not read alone,
Merely to gain a pair of “leading-strings.”⁽¹⁾

LXXXV.

The lofty Senate-House was filled—and there
Sat the Vice-Chancellor on his dread throne,
Girt with a phalanx of the wise and fair,
For ladies' eyes amongst the “Doctors” shone.
Above, the undergraduates appeared
In crowds, to make an uproar nothing loth;
And Harvey was considerably cheered,
As slowly he advanced to take the oath.

LXXXVI.

The gaze of all was on him, and a glass
Some fair young hand would delicately raise,
More clearly to behold the "lion" pass,
While some his looks, and some his learning praise.
"What tender eyes," sighed one, "so soft yet bright !
(And then she gracefully arranged her veil,)
"But, oh ! that nasty reading's spoilt him quite,
"Poor dear young man ! he looks so *very* pale !"

LXXXVII.

And she was right—his paleness was extreme ;
He shook with illness, and could scarce complete
The ceremony : though he strove to seem
At ease, 't was useless ; and his trembling feet
Had hardly reached his home, before they sunk,
And suffering's strength o'ercame his stubborn will.
The people at his lodgings thought him drunk,
Until they found him seriously ill.

LXXXVIII.

Then he was put to bed, and they sent off
For medical advice : the doctor came,
Looked solemn, said it was an ugly cough,
And gave no hopes, but—took his fee the same.
He called, most regularly, twice a day,
(Ill-omen'd visits to a patient's purse,)
Still shook his head, still took his fee away,
Whilst Harvey, hour by hour, was growing worse.

LXXXIX.

All skill was valueless ;—how could the leech
Deaden by art the *spirit's* sense of pain ;
Revive the shattered energies, and teach
Youth's dried up sources to gush forth again ?
Furled were the soaring pinions of the soul,
The o'erbent bow had snapped to meet no more ;
Crushed at the fountain lay the silver bowl,
And none its form of beauty could restore.

XC.

Fast sank that doomed one, till his wasted frame
Would scarcely mark the bed whereon it pressed ;
And his young spirit, once the slave of fame,
Panted, impatient, for eternal rest !
As stands the victor o'er his prostrate foe,
And half regrets the havoc he has made,
Whilst pity still restrains the final blow,
So death, awhile, the " coup-de-grace " delayed.

XCI.

His parents had been summoned to the scene,
And sat in watchful anguish by his bed ;
His love to them a source of bliss had been,
And o'er their latter days enjoyment shed.
And he would lay for hours, his pale thin hand
Clasped in his mother's, while, in words like these,
So weakly breathed you scarce could understand,
His burdened feelings found a partial ease.

XCII.

- “ Not such the meeting”—and he faintly smiled,—
“ This dull close room, this silence, and those tears —
“ Not such the meeting, Mother, which beguiled
“ With hope the labours of my weary years ;
“ Not such the picture, which in each fond heart
“ Imagination’s fairy pencil drew ;
“ To meet again, and only meet to part,
“ To speak once more, and only an—adieu !

XCIII.

- “ Oft, when my wearied brain would claim repose,
“ The reins of fancy loosened, I would lie,
“ Whilst ever and anon there smiling rose
“ A beauteous vision to my spirit’s eye ;
“ Methought before me lay a sunny land,
“ Where thrilling accents of angelic song
“ Stole floating through the air ; while, hand in hand,
“ Forms fairer far than mortal moved along !

XCIV.

“ And then the minstrels of that unseen choir
“ Breathed forth a melody of sweeter strain,
“ And my astonished eyes beheld my sire,
“ With thee, my Mother, wandering o’er the plain ;
“ And with ye there was one, O God ! how fair,
“ Fair as ere perfidy had stamped her shame—
“ Yes, the beloved, the treacherous, was there,
“ The one I cannot—will not—dare not name !

XCV.

“ And ye, methought, appeared another face
“ And form,—’t was mine ! and I was kneeling down
“ By her : ye blessed us in a soft embrace ;
“ She seemed to whisper, ‘ Dearest, I ’m thine own ! ’
“ Then rose a thousand perf to the skies,
“ In louder strains the heav’nly music broke ;
“ Flashed from the flow’rs a thousand brighter dyes,
“ Till burst the gorgeous bubble, and—I woke !

XCVI.

“ Oh ! ’twas a beauteous vision, and did seem,
“ In all its vivid brilliancy so clear,
“ ’T were hard to think it but an empty dream,
“ A mere illusion, meaningless, though dear !
“ Oh ! ’twas a beauteous vision, Mother mine,
“ A concentration of delight and love,
“ Which waits the impress of the hand divine—
“ And surely will be realized above !

XCVII.

“ Oh ! could I breathe, once more, that balmy air
“ Which fanned my brow in childhood, I were blest ;
“ ’Twould give me strength this agony to bear,
“ And uncomplaining I could sink to rest !
“ Hard falls the hand of fate upon my youth,
“ And death hath rudely its sweet chords unstrung :
“ Was there no riper bud ? O God ! in sooth
“ It is a bitter thing to die so young !”

D

XCVIII.

He ceased, and then all suddenly there passed
A slight convulsion o'er his faded frame ;
And his white lips, still quiv'ring to the last,
Strove faintly to articulate a name.
Unheard by all except a mother's ear,
Who, in her anguish, tremblingly bent o'er,
And with that name scarce uttered, yet so dear,
The spirit passed, and Harvey was no more !

XCIX.

Yes, he was gone—the learned and the good,
Virtue availed not, nor could science save ;
Chilled was the current of his youthful blood,
And years of labour had but dug his grave.
Prayers were not wanting, for the pious Plane
Knelt night and morning by the sufferer's side ;
The leech had used his art, but all in vain—
Pills, prayers, and Plane availed not—and he died.

C.

Edward was certainly much grieved, at first,
And long deplored the loss of such a friend ;
But grief of all descriptions, e'en the worst,
By nature's wise provision hath an end.
In Vincent's gay society he sought
For consolation and he quickly found
An antidote to every serious thought,
In dissipation's gay and giddy round.

CI.

It were a tedious task, and one, I fear,
But little edifying, to retrace
Each separate folly of their mad career,
Each separate token of their joint disgrace.
The wild carouse—potations long and deep,
The midnight revel, and the midnight brawl,
The brothel's short and unrefreshing sleep,
Were best but hinted at—if told at all.

CII.

Such was their life : and none will be surprised
That these backslidings from the holy way,
The saints of Granta should have scandalized,
And shocked those "*Sims*"⁽²⁾ who never went astray.
Of such the college had a noted set,
Who, still more clear to make their piety,
On certain evenings, by appointment met
To praise the Lord, and—tipple weak bohea !

CIII.

They were queer fellows, and the name of "*Sims*,"
Among the godless was a standing jest ;
Their sober parties, and their evening hymns,
To other banquets gave a pleasant zest ;
And those who listened oftentimes might hear
The pious chantings which the saints began,
Rudely re-echoed from some chamber near,
By "*Paddy's Wedding*," or by "*Moll's Flash-man*."

CIV.

To them no Sabbath was a *resting* day,
They deemed repose deserving of reproof;
In their own chapel not content to pray,
They swelled "St. Mary's" to the very roof.
Oft, too, our hero and his friend would pass
By that famed edifice — but we're afraid
'Twas not religion, but some pretty lass,
Which drew their steps along the "King's Parade."

CV.

It is a curious and instructive sight
That "King's Parade" on Sunday evening shows;
Loads of strange animals emerge to sight,
Whores, housemaids, milliners, and counter beaux!
Coarse jests are bandied through the motley throng,
Snobs meet their sweethearts at this careless hour,
And troops of dashing gownsmen roam along,
"Seeking," like Satan, "whom they shall devour."

CVI.

And, lo ! a striking feature in the scene,
Her spacious doors " St. Mary's " opens wide,
Whence issues forth, with reverential mien,
Of yawning worshippers the living tide.
These swell the concourse, and the whole doth form
A startling contrast, as one smiling sees,
Together jumbled—a promiscuous swarm,
A mingled mass of drabs and devotees.

CVII.

There too, conspicuous, with majestic walk,
Their white bands striking terror from afar,
The well-paid guardians of our morals stalk,
Exterminators of each rash cigar !
No grub so filthy, but it hath its use,
And true the axiom in this case one finds,
When harlot-hunting parsons rake the stews—
A dirty task, and fit for dirty minds.

CVIII.

But "six and eightpence" pays the odious fame :

These moral scavengers, to gain their fee,
Haunt each low sink of infamy and shame,
And act the nightmen to society !

So o'er the ocean, mariners have seen
To speed, on filthy sustenance intent,
(How apt a simile !) the bird obscene,
Which feeds upon another's excrement.

CIX.

O dissipation ! thou art wondrous sweet,
When first we taste thee—but that soon is past ;
And then the disappointment is complete,
For cursed bitter dost thou get at last !
Thou bringest to us, in thy lengthy train,
The very worst of all terrestrial ills :
The constitution may be cured again—
But who the devil can get rid of bills ?

CX.

Much, in all ages, has been sung and said
About the perfidy of bosom friends,
Who cut your company when wealth has fled—
But, oh ! your duns' acquaintance never ends !
That friends are like them we have often wished—
Whilst rich, they scarcely trouble you at all ;
But when you're ruined thoroughly, and dished,
You're sure to see the faithful fellows call !

CXI.

Their stock of lies is never known to fail,
Excuses are not wanting in the least ;
They forge as many as (in Scripture's tale)
Those made, we're told, who shirked the marriage feast.
One has "a payment to make up," and one
"Has lately broke, and needs the means of life ;"
And then a third, most sentimental dun,
Has "six small children, and a pregnant wife."

CXII.

Now Edward was beset by not a few
Of these annoyances, who, night and day,
Knocked at his door, and clamoured for their due
In a particularly vexing way ;
They seemed to think their perseverance might
Induce our hero, like the "widow's judge,"
To grant to noise what he refused to right—
But they were wrong, for Edward would not budge.

CXIII.

He kept at home, and wisely too, for he
Had none of what is vulgarly called "tin ;"
The last he'd squandered on his "chère amie,"
To gratify the lady's taste for gin.
To raise the wind by Vincent's aid he'd tried,
But there his "wounded spirit found no balm,"
For his friend's purse, it cannot be denied,
Was, like his own, much subject to a calm.

CXIV.

This state of things could not for ever last,
Credit grew scarce, and luxuries were dear ;
The long vacation was approaching fast,
And how to spend it was by no means clear.
At length occurred a practicable scheme—
Edward resolved to visit home once more ;
The plan was cheap, at least, though he might deem
This filial duty an especial bore.

CXV.

To lessen somewhat the extreme *ennui*
He well foresaw this visit would attend,
By being bored at least in *company*,
He gave an invitation to his friend.
“ Be not disturbed,” he said, “ by scruples nice—
“ A friend of mine, my father ’ll greet with joy ;
“ And though he’s rather strict, and too precise,
“ Yet he’s a rare old hospitable boy !”

CXVI.

Vincent had no objection to propose—

Indeed his constitution had at length
Some need of rest, and plainly did disclose
Undoubted symptoms of decaying strength.
So the two worthies quickly were agreed ;
They borrowed cash, to clear them on the road,
And, one fine night, set off with all due speed,
(While duns were sleeping) to their fresh abode.

CXVII.

Warm wère the greetings which affection gave,
And tears were flowing—not the tears of pain,
But of delight—the tears of those who have
Their own lost wanderer by their side again ;
The hallowed influence of that sainted love
Which swells the parents' and the sister's breast,
Around the prodigal their soft links wove,
And stilled the din of passion into rest.

CXVIII.

The stranger failed not to receive his share
 (When dearer ties had claimed their fitting part)
Of courteous welcome from the aged pair—
 A welcome not of form, but from the heart.
And then their plain, but honest, kindness took
 A character of soft and winning grace,
From the half bashful, half approving look
 Which lighted Isabel's expressive face.

CXIX.

Now Vincent's bosom was by no means ice,
 Indeed, "volcano" were a fitter name;
A pretty face, once seen, would in a trice
 Kindle a most ungovernable flame;
O'er which no spark ethereal held the sway
 Of pure affection, or Platonic fire;
Whose light contracted each unholy ray
 From the dark elements of gross desire.

CXX.

He was an atheist to the creed of love,
His unbelief was open and sincere ;
The very mention never failed to move
His pitying smile, or cold and callous sneer.
He deemed the person, not the heart, a prize,
Esteem'd the sex a venal thing, and base ;
A kind of rather useful merchandize,
Towards the propagation of one's race.

CXXI.

It must be owned that Vincent went too far,
In this low estimate of female worth ;
Who has not heard, and read, that women are
“ The greatest blessings to be found on earth ? ”
Legions of scribblers, from the earliest times,
Have never ceased pen, paper, brain to vex,
In tedious prose, and still more tedious rhymes,
With panegyrics on the lovely sex.

CXXII.

Now Horace says, 'tis proper to pursue
A middle course in all things, as the best ;
And, doubtless, it is fitting so to do
In this great matter as in all the rest :
Consider women with impartial eye,
As neither wholly good nor wholly evil ;
Not wholly sprung from hell, nor deigned from sky,
Not wholly angel, and not wholly devil.

CXXIII.

There's no denying that the charming fair
Are very useful in their proper sphere ;
But then, 'tis deuced hard to keep them there—
They love to meddle, and to interfere
In other matters, which of right belong
To man's less frivolous and feeble sway ;
And none can tell the sad amount of wrong
The sex, since Eve's first slip, have done that way.

CXXIV.

There is a certain reverence, 'tis just,
The weaker sex should from the stronger claim—
The only things one hesitates to trust
To women's keeping, are one's purse and fame.
Rings, robes, silk stockings, cachmeres, frills, and furs,
On your finances form a ceaseless drain,
Till husbands curse the name of milliners,
And long for *fig-leaves* to come in again !

CXXV.

If she prefer to ornament your brows,
And wound your honour, but preserve your purse,
The wife is called a strumpet ; but her spouse
Is thought an ass—and that's a great deal worse !
Wives there may be, both chaste and frugal too,
But there's a maxim I was taught at school—
(It may be false, but I believe it true)—
“ 'Tis the exception which makes good the rule ! ”

CXXVI.

But to return : the love which oft of yore
His well trained lips to others had professed,
The sight of Isabel aroused once more,
And fired the train of passion in his breast.
He prayed propitious Fortune, which had thrown
A prize so unexpected in his way,
With prosperous issue the attempt to crown,
And aid the capture of so fair a prey.

CXXVII.

His judgment taught him that no vulgar art,
Such as a vulgar victory might win,
Would gain the virgin fortress of her heart,
And yield up Virtue's citadel to sin.
No common conquest was the one he sought,
Consummate talent must the scheme devise ;
And dearly must the victory be bought—
But not too dearly, for so rare a prize.

CXXVIII.

His first endeavours were employed to gain
A surer footing in his friend's abode
Than mere acquaintance gave ; and to attain
The parents' favour seemed the shortest road.
His subtle influence round their hearts to wind,
And steal their confidence, was done with ease ;
For nature had endowed his supple mind
With skill to flatter, and with art to please.

CXXIX.

His interest daily more extended grew,
Their unsuspecting natures had been won,
Until, at last, they 'd almost learned to view
The quondam stranger as another son.
And Isabel (whose soul, to duty bent,
Followed obedient the parental voice,)
Loved with a fond but guileless sentiment
The fascinating object of their choice.

CXXX.

Oft in some lone and unfrequented walk,
Where fancy prompted, the young pair would stray,
No envious eye to watch, no tongue to talk,
No crabb'd duenna to observe the way.
Sweet were those meetings, and the maiden's heart
Warmed with a fatal, but delicious flame ;
While Vincent acted to the life his part,
And uttered all of love—except the name.

CXXXI.

And he had lately, with insidious zeal,
A seeming interest in her mind displayed,
Taught her, her own deficiencies to feel,
And mourn the little progress she had made :
Then, with apparent candour, would suggest
(Candour the hypocrite's unfailing mask)
Such slight improvements as appeared the best,
And offered his assistance to the task.

CXXXII.

He chose her studies, and the books he lent,
Though nominally fitted to improve,
Yet in reality were merely meant
In reason's garb to pave the way of love.
'Tis true, no grossness in the page appeared
To rouse disgust, or raise the modest blush ;
Their's was the art concealed—and, so, unfear'd—
To undermine but not at once to crush.

CXXXIII.

Vincent's experience had foreseen the use
Of means like these towards the wished-for end ;
For he had pondered well on every *ruse*,
Which to success might ultimately tend :
And no contrivance of his varied skill,
He knew, would operate with greater force,
Than thus a subtle poison to instil,
And taint the stream of virtue at its source.

CXXXIV.

There is a potent agency in books,
To sway the feelings of a youthful mind :
In them no curious or reproving looks,
No awkward queries do we dread to find :
Those "silent monitors" too often teach
A fearful lesson, writ in words of fire,
And by a scarce perceived, but fatal breach,
Admit the lawless demons of desire.

CXXXV.

Sure was the venom of that deadly spell,
Swift was the progress of the work of shame ;
And one, who closely watched the maid, might tell
Her very nature was no more the same :
A soft voluptuous languor had o'erspread
The form whose bounding grace once mocked the fawn,
And from her eye a brighter glance there sped,
The glance of passion in its early dawn.

CXXXVI.

What could her untaught purity avail
Against the practised weapons of deceit?
Love's ever false but fascinating tale,
To maiden inexperience still is sweet.
She found in Vincent, or believed she found,
A sure foundation, and a fitting base,
Whereon her heart's young confidence to ground,
Nor deemed the superstructure were disgrace.

CXXXVII.

She had not paused to analyze or sift
The soft emotions of that growing love,
Which blessed her being, and appeared to lift
Her earthly nature to the realms above.
Were it an angel's or a demon's wing,
Whereon her spirit had essayed to soar,
Her reason asked not ;—she but knew one thing,
That she was happy—and she sought no more.

CXXXVIII.

Vincent had marked, with well dissembled care,
The rapid progress of the scheme he'd laid,
And now determined, while the path lay fair,
To end his labours, and possess the maid.
Right in his grasp the tempting fruit was set—
Why hesitate to pluck the wished-for joy?
The bird was struggling in the fowler's net—
Why hesitate to seize, and to destroy?

CXXXIX.

Fair was the evening, not a breath of wind
Stirred in the foliage, or disturbed the stream;
Phœbus his radiant empire had resigned
To his pale sister's mild and modest beam.
Nature's vast family lay hushed and still,
The world itself seemed sinking to repose;
And, save the trickling of yon silver rill,
No sound, to break the spell of silence, rose.

CXL.

To the cool covert of a verdant grove,
Through whose o'erarching branches Luna shed
Her rays, (as if to smile upon their love,)
Chance had, that evening, the young couple led :
It seemed a spot where only lovers meet,
To the profane and vulgar step denied,—
They sat together in that lone retreat,
The tempter and the tempted—side by side.

CXLI.

No sound was uttered;—but that outward pause
Was not the token of internal rest;
Wild feelings flushed her cheek, and heaved the gauze
Which veiled the virgin beauties of her breast.
Her head was raised, to check the golden hair
Which wantoned o'er her brow ; then drooped again
To seek her lover's breast—and, pillowed there,
She seemed a new, *yet sinless* Magdalen !

CXLII.

His arm encircled her—and, bending down,
His eager lips imbibed her balmy breath ;—
Oh ! at that instant could her life have flown,
She would have welcomed so beloved a death !
The pause was broken—and the maiden heard
The tale of passion breathed into her ear,
By him whose every tone, whose every word,
She deemed the music of a higher sphere.

CXLIII.

“ Fairest, why thus despondent dost thou lie ?
“ Say, why doth melancholy veil thy charms ?
“ Why lights not passion up thy glorious eye ?
“ Why dost thou tremble in thy Vincent’s arms ?
“ Thy lover is beside thee ;—art thou not
“ His dearest joy, his very life and pride ?
“ Oh ! let our union consecrate the spot,
“ Be mine, sweet Isabel, and nature’s bride.

CXLIV.

- “ What needs there more to sanctify the rite ?
“ Above the canopy of God is spread ;
“ And the pale queen of Heaven’s approving light
“ Deigns its soft radiance o’er the scene to shed.
“ Where is the earthly temple which can boast
“ A fane so purely sacred and divine ?
“ Our vows are sealed before the angelic host,
“ And the Almighty hath prepared our shrine !

CXLV.

- “ Love, in all creatures, Providence hath made
“ To be the solace of their weary fate :
“ In the recesses of yon leafy glade
“ Each bird reposes by its feathered mate.
“ Through the wide universe one law extends,
“ Obeyed below and ratified above ;
“ The wisest, noblest of our Maker’s ends—
“ God made the universe, and God is love !

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CXLVI.

" Arouse thee, dearest, 'tis thy lover's arm
" Which clasps thy yielding form ; and, oh ! thou art
" Pressed to a bosom where, to reach thee, harm
" Must find its passage through a lover's heart !
" Arouse thee, dearest, 'tis thy nuptial hour,
" And here, my bride, I claim thee with a kiss ;
" Mine art thou, maiden !—and in this fair bower,
" Pleasure and love have strewn the couch of bliss."

CXLVII.

He ceased—and while the maid's enraptured soul
Drank deep of love, yet failed to quench its drouth,
His daring lips, now grown more daring, stole
Their first won trophies from her roseate mouth.
Was it the virgin's fear alone which drove
The tell tale glow of crimson to her cheek ?
Was it the virgin's fear, or was it love,
Which broke the heart's deep trance, and bade it speak ?

CXLVIII.

- “ Here in this spot, where peace would seem to reign,
“ Where earth, and sky, and nature woo to rest,
“ My troubled spirit seeks repose in vain,
“ And passion’s deadly conflicts rack my breast.
“ Like the frail bark, on stormy waters cast,
“ Which wind and billows threaten to o’erwhelm,
“ My feeble reason bends beneath the blast,
“ And sinks—unless thy hand direct the helm.

CXLIX.

- “ There is a magic in each word of thine,
“ To win the soul against its better sense,
“ To clothe the form of sin in garb divine,
“ And give to passion’s voice, omnipotence.
“ Thy love assigns a nobler, dearer part—
“ Beloved by thee, a prouder thing I seem ;
“ And in the dreary desert of my heart
“ Thou makest to gush forth a living stream.

CL.

- “ There is a piercing but mysterious fire,
“ Which lights thy glances when on me they turn,
“ As though they glowed with some untold desire—
“ And oh ! how sweet thy kisses !—but they burn.
“ ’Tis strange, I never felt a sense of shame
“ When Edward or my parents pressed my brow ;
“ Their’s were love’s kisses too, but not the same,—
“ They left no scorch behind, as thine do now.

CLI.

- “ Yes, thou hast claimed me, and I own the bond—
“ Love made me what I am, and love alone ;
“ Love formed my nature by its magic wand,
“ Love the Creator re-demands his own.
“ Thine am I, Vincent—thine, for thou art love—
“ All other ties, all other names, farewell !
“ Thine am I, ever thine—below, above—
“ In life or death still thine—in heaven or hell.”

CLII.

Here must the veil be dropped;—it were not right,
Our pen should dwell at length upon the rest,
Or paint the guilty pleasures of that night—
No, the sad sequel must be only guessed.
How vows were pledged within that conscious bower,
How warm caresses more unguarded grew;
Till passion triumphed in that fatal hour,
And “shuddering virtue bid” the maid “adieu.”

CLIII.

'Twas not correct, nay, very wrong, we know,
And ought to make good folks sincerely grieve,
That innocence should be deluded so—
But then the girls are foolish to believe.
Her virtue should more firmly have held out—
But we relate the thing as it occurred;
These love affairs are always, none can doubt,
Somewhat improper, and no less absurd.

CLIV.

Now here our Pegasus must take a leap,
 We skip some half-a-dozen months, and then
 (The loss no doubt our readers will hold cheap)
 Edward is fixed at Granta once again.
 The worthy pastor 'd pinched himself to pay
 The past year's follies of his worthless son,
 And Edward had arrived, at ease, and gay,
 Relieved from dread of bailiff or of dun.

CLV.

Duns are sad hypocrites, and 'tis a shame
 They so insidiously should gild the pills
 They make us swallow ; by the specious name
 Of "small accounts" they christen all their bills.
 Each smirking rascal, with unblushing front,
 Deems it a point of etiquette to call
 His six-and thirty pages of account,
 (*Lucus a non lucendo*) always "small."

* * * * *

CLVI.

Wild sped the revel ; shout, and song, and jest,
Rang through the chamber and alarmed the street ;
In sooth it was a grand "right merrie" feast,
As all feasts are when youths congenial meet.
The rarest fruits the season could afford,
To tempt the taste in rich profusion lay ;
Wines the most costly decked the groaning board,
(All which unhappy fathers had to pay).

CLVII.

Some were at dice, and some at *rouge-et-noir*,
Some sang a bawdy song, or made a joke ;
Some were dead drunk and lying on the floor,
Whilst some were drinking still, and some did smoke,
Edward was listening to a drunken set,
Who praised the charms and boasted the renown
Of some young lady they had somewhere met,
Who'd lately made her debut on the town.

CLVIII.

We're loth to own it, but the god of wine
Had put our hero's faculties to flight,
And he proposed the somewhat rash design
Of visiting the nymph that very night.
The rest agreed, and off the party went,
(Regarding little equilibrium's laws),
To 'scape the proctor's vigilance intent,
And safely reach the colony of w—s.

CLIX.

In all due time they made their destined port,
A time when honest folks are in their beds,
And as they went along, by way of sport,
They broke some dozen lamps and ditto heads.
The brothel stood before them, and a knock,
Which to the door was knowingly applied,
Like "open Sesame," undid the lock,
And all were speedily safe lodged inside.

CLX.

One of the troop more sober than the rest,
 And thus enabled to make better haste,
 Outstripped the others, and with ribald jest,
 And maudlin fondness, clasped the Cyprian's waist.
 Say—why doth Edward start, as if there sped
 Through his seared brain the blasting bolt of hell?
 Why hath the hue of death his cheek o'erspread?
 What mean those words, "Damnation!—Isabel!"

* * * * *

CLXI.

Since the last tragical event, suppose
 Two years, or thereabouts, to intervene;
 My light capricious muse doth now propose
 To lift the curtain from another scene.
 No doubt the actors you will recognise,
 Although appearing in far different parts;
 But then, you know, old Chronos as he flies
 Works mighty changes in all human hearts.

CLXII.

Mark you that pleasant village, with the trees
 Bounding on every side the smiling view,
Whose leaves are playing in the wanton breeze,
 Like—I can't find a simile that's new !
And that tall spire, which, rising to the sky,
 Points out the mansion of the living God,
And tow'rs above the other roofs as high
 As *He* doth o'er the children of the sod.

CLXIII.

Mark you that cottage, where the verdant plot
 Extends (Dame Nature's carpet) to the door ?
An air of cheerfulness pervades the spot,
 Where all seems neat and orderly, though poor.
No signs of wealth or luxury invite
 The *blasé'd* epicure's fastidious gaze ;
No dandy would be pleased with such a site
 Wherein to spend his long and useless days.

CLXIV.

Yet is there something grateful to the eye

In the retiring beauties of the place,

Which seem to borrow from simplicity

An unadorned, yet not unpleasing, grace.

All is in keeping with the picture—care

And worldly passions seem to stand aloof.

And pleased one sees the very pigeons there

Wheel in security around the roof.

CLXV.

There is a garden too, you may perceive,

Which boasts, 'tis true, no proud exotic flow'rs,

Whose haughty beauties tempt one to believe

The gaudy things look scornfully on our's.

Yet 'tis a pretty garden ne'ertheless ;

And a true taste, I fancy, might prefer

Its unassuming rustic loveliness

To the grand parterre's tawdry character.

CLXVI.

Mark those three forms—a youthful girl is one,—

Which now are slowly moving o'er the green ;

Not unsupported walks she, or alone,

But on each fond companion's arm doth lean :

One is an aged dame, whose figure bends

Beneath a heavy weight of years : in sooth

It seems a startling change in nature's ends,

That age should thus be seen supporting youth.

CLXVII.

These then are two ; the other of the three,

A tall worn-looking man, yet very young ;

Still, by an air of likeness, seems to be

From the same lineage as the others sprung.

But you'll excuse my painting at more length

These last nam'd worthies, for no doubt you thirst

With curiosity's extremest strength

To hear a little more about the first.

CLXVIII.

Oh ! she is beautiful, that feeble maid,
But 'tis a beauty mournful to the eye—
It tells of hopes and happiness decayed,
Of guilt, and of remorse which ne'er can die.
There is despondency in every look,
Which shows how fearful is the wreck within,
As though the conscious spirit could not brook
The grievous load it bears of woes and sin !

CLXIX.

That glorious eye of purest, brightest blue,
Where mirth once played, with innocence combin'd,
Though still retaining its delicious hue,
Hath lost the joy it borrowed from the mind.
No more 'tis raised exultingly to heav'n,
As though to claim a kindred being there,
But seems to beg, not hope, to be forgiv'n,
With glance that's half repentance, half despair !

CLXX.

O'er the fair brow which once hath been the seat
Of noble beauty and of classic grace,
The demon Care has passed, whose cruel feet
Have of their passage left full many a trace.
And the sweet cheek whose rose the zephyr's breath
In amorous sport so often did caress—
How altered is it ! for the hue of death
Hath changed, though not destroyed, its loveliness.

CLXXI.

That slender form which in each graceful move,
(By nature fashioned wonder to create)
A sylph might envy, or a sculptor love,
Hath shrunk and faded 'neath the blows of fate.
The long bright ringlets of her auburn hair
Still o'er her neck luxuriantly play ;
Yet you may note an alteration there—
The auburn now is intermixed with grey !

CLXXII.

Sorrow, 'tis said, when carried to extremes,
Hath oft been known, ev'n in a single night,
(I should not like to have the patient's dreams)
To turn youth's hair, whate'er its hue, to white.
If on the contrary, excess of woes,
Of lamentations, tears, and all such drivell,
Turned *grey* to *brown*, ye gods ! how all old beaux
And painted dowagers would weep and snivel !

CLXXIII.

Reader, we fear 'twill be beyond thy pow'r,
Through such a change as this our pen doth tell,
To recognise in that fair faded flow'r,
Our story's heroine, poor Isabel.
Yet it is she, supported by the arms
Of Edward and her mother, whom we bring
Before your view,—no longer rich in charms
Or youth's soft bloom—a blighted, dying thing.

CLXXIV.

We left her in a place can scarce be named,
In this fastidious age, to ears polite ;
'Twas in——my pen is really so ashamed
It actually blushes as I write !
'Twas in a brothel—(I feel more composed
Now the sad word is out, since out it must)
That she was left, you'll recollect, exposed
To half a dozen striplings' drunken lust.

CLXXV.

You will remember, too, her brother had,
Though rather drunk, sufficient sense to know
His sister ; and the sight nigh drove him mad,
Though quickly sobered by the cruel blow.
To her that meeting was a stunning stroke ;
At once she fainted without scream or noise :
Edward's companions thought it a good joke—
There are no ruffians like your drunken boys !

CLXXVI.

Yet there was something fearful in his air
As he expressed a wish to be alone
With that lost girl, who lay all senseless there,
That made them glad to vanish one by one.
'Tis true they ventured on some hints obscene
When all had safely cleared the brothel's door,
Yet knew they "valour's better part," I ween,
Too well to risk a single word before.

CLXXVII.

What was the nature of the interview,
What passed between them, not a soul can tell,
And there I am as ignorant as you.
But the result was this: that Isabel
Next day departed wretched, but resigned,
To the indulgent home she'd madly spurned—
Edward went with her, leaving far behind,
For ever, Granta's walls, in wisdom learn'd.

CLXXVIII.

Though great and grievous be the guilt incurred,
 Though flagrant be the breach of virtue's laws,
Parental love is ever undeterred,
 From pleading ev'n the worst offender's cause.
So when the penitent had reached the home,
 Which ne'er till she had brought it new disgrace,
No stern deserved reproaches were her doom,
 She found an injured mother's fond embrace.

CLXXIX.

I said a *mother's* ; for the poor old man
 Who gave her being, and whose hoary locks,
By her dishonoured, made his little span
 Of life a thing at which the vulgar mocks ;
Had from the fatal instant of her flight,
 Been lost to ev'ry intellectual ray ;
While through his spirit's dark and cheerless night
 The idiot's wild fantastic dreams did play.

CLXXX.

Oh God ! 'twas truly piteous to behold
A visitation of such awful woe,
Fall'n upon one so holy and so old—
To think, too, that a daughter dealt the blow !
At death's last summons he had been prepared
To yield to God his being, pure from sin.
Why died he not ? at least there had been spared
That senseless stare, that horrid gibbering grin.

CLXXXI.

Day after day he'd sit with glassy eye,
Through which no lustre of expression shone,
Gazing unconscious upon vacancy ;
All former sense of mem'ry, too, had gone.
He did not even recognize or greet
The aged partner of his life and love,
It seemed oblivion hopeless and complete,
Defying all to conquer or remove.

CLXXXII.

Once to excite him, they had had recourse
To the bold mention of his daughter's name.
They thought the method might per chance have force
Of smould'ring sentiment to fan the flame.
But all was vain, his glance but grew more wild
And all they heard him say was (muttering half)
"Isabel ! Isabel ! weep not my child !"
And then his lips resumed their silly laugh.

CLXXXIII.

The blow had fallen too heavily to bear ;
Could he endure the consciousness that she
Whose life he gave, whose pleasures were his care,
From the first hour when prattling on his knee
Her infant fondness gladdened his proud heart—
That *she*, forswearing ev'ry sacred tie,
From her old father's presence should depart,
And leave, him wretched and disgraced, to die ?

CLXXXIV.

Had the almighty will of heav'n but deigned
Of faith some other trial to demand,
However bitter, he had not complained,
But meekly bowed before the chastening hand.
So with stern courage each assassin's wound
The murdered Cæsar bore, nor e'er confessed
A single pang of anguish, till he found
A friend's ungrateful dagger at his breast !

CLXXXV.

Oh ! who can tell the love with which he clave,
To that fair fragile girl, whose early dawn
Of future virtues such a promise gave—
(How sad the evening of so bright a morn !)
Each humble office by affection owed,
But which a son's proud feelings are above,
He ever found in tenderness bestowed,
By the sweet homage of a daughter's love !

CLXXXVI.

Was it for this he reared that lonely rose,
Guarding with jealous care the precious flow'r,
Lest some wild breeze destroying as it blows,
Should crush the pride and beauty of his bow'r ?
Lest the rude sun each soft and opening charm,
Should fiercely scorch, or chilling winter blast ;
Had he then sheltered it so long from harm,
For man's unhallowed hand to pluck at last ?

CLXXXVII.

He was so happy in the cherished gift,
So grateful to his God, who gave the boon,
It might a little longer have been left,
Death would have called him from his treasure soon.
He was not envious, he had injured none,
Others with fair and mighty flocks were blest —
The spoiler's lust had robbed *him* of the one
Poor lamb which "lay and nestled in his breast !"

CLXXXVIII.

What were the fearful feelings of her heart,
When she returned, a thing of guilt and shame,
Writhing beneath th' intolerable smart,
Of conscience, which no flatteries can tame?
Traitor to parents, honour and her God,
Seared by the damning contact of the bad,
What were her feelings when she reached th' abode
Where pined a father, spirit-crushed and mad?

CLXXXIX.

She might have thought no misery so great
Again could burst o'er her devoted head,
As when before the cruel hand of fate,
Love's smiling visions had for ever fled.
When she awoke from passion's burning dream,
To find a villain where she'd loved so well,
To find the light, she deemed a guiding beam,
Was a perfidious glare that sprang from hell.

CXC.

Oh ! 'tis a bitter anguish when the soul
On soaring wings of confidence doth fly,
With light'ning speed to love, as to a goal
Of joy,—then finds the fancied bliss a lie :
As though some holy saint who dies resigned
In hopes of happiness beyond the grave,
Should, when the mortal strife is ended, find
No heav'n to greet him, and no Christ to save !

CXCI.

Yet the elastic spirit, which in youth
It takes so much to break and overthrow,
Might have borne up against the stunning truth,
And rallied ev'n beneath so great a blow.
Had it but visited herself alone ;
But when it touched the honoured hairs of him
Whom she yet loved, although she had undone,
It filled her cup of sorrows to the brim.

CXCII.

In vain she knelt before the old man's feet,
In vain bedewed his hands with scalding tears,
In vain addressed him by each name most sweet
And fascinating to a father's ears.
Affection's soft entreaties, which might sway
A heart of marble, were exhausted all :—
Alas ! his spirit was too far away
For ev'n a daughter's summons to recall.

CXCIII.

And when she owned how deeply she had erred,
Scorning to make the guilt committed less,
With the same stolid stare the idiot heard
Her prayers that he would pardon her and bless.
God knows that silence was a fearful pain
To the poor sinner ; it had scarce been worse
Or deadlier torture, if in accents sane
His voice had spoken, not to bless, but curse !

F

CXCIV.

From that sad hour she faded by degrees,
Like plant that droopeth imperceptibly ;
Her wounded heart no remedy could ease—
The grave alone could give tranquillity.
No outward pain her youthful vigour slew ;
'Tis true her cheek grew colourless and thin,
But 'twas the spirit's sickness which she knew,
The malady was seated all *within*.

CXC.V.

The only pleasure she appeared to feel
Was on the Sabbath, when her strength allow'd
To seek the village church, and meekly kneel
Before her God with faith sincere, not loud.
Conscious of sin, she ne'ertheless might trust,
While humbly prostrate in repentant mood,
One day she might be happy with the just,
Through the atonement of her Saviour's blood.

CXCVI.

Nor on her entrance to the house of prayer,
Did sneers or scornful whisperings await
The guilty one ; no proud or pitying stare
Of haughty virtue seemed to mock her fate.
Those lowly peasants, an unlettered race,
Thought not to prove superior purity
By trampling on the fall'n, nor deemed disgrace
To show an erring sister courtesy.

CXCVII.

They knew not the refinements of high life,
Where, if some hapless damsel chance to fall
Seduction's victim—widow, virgin, wife,
Are up in arms, and “murder” loudly bawl.
Old maids are mostly of the rabid crew,
The leading furies, spitting fire and flame—
With *them* perhaps 'tis envy, for they'd do
(But men won't tempt them to it) just the same.

CXCVIII.

Twould be a curious question for some wise
And skilled investigator to decide,
If those fair dames, who raise the loudest cries,
Are not as bad as she whom they deride.
You know "to set a thief to catch a thief"
Is an ingenious method ; and yet more,
With us the custom is, in my belief,
To set a strumpet to find out a w——

CXCIX.

You who are wont, with loathing and disgust,
From the lost wanderer of the streets to turn,
Think you that victim of man's lawless lust
Hath *always* been a fitting thing to spurn ?
Think you her life hath never had its time
Of fond illusions, innocent delights,
Before she reached the lowest hell of crime,
And passed in guilty joys her purchased nights ?

CC.

Think you no mother with affection's care
Bent o'er the slumbers of the darling child,
Proud to behold her grow each day more fair?—
Think you no father blessed, no sister smiled?
Think you no suitor, ere the spoiler's fraud
Doomed the dark future of her life to shame,
Her beauteous image in his heart adored,
And pressed a tender but an honest flame?

CCI.

She may have been the idol and the boast
Of loving friends, though now debased and low;
None know how great the treasure she has lost—
Then do not scornfully insult her woe.
Perhaps her fatal error hath brought down
An avalanche of sorrow: none can tell
How many hopes were blighted and o'erthrown,
How many hearts were broken when she fell!

CCII.

Oh ! when your soul indignantly doth shrink
From the bold glance of her lascivious eye,
Let pity claim her portion, when you think
How much that glance conceals of misery ;
That gaudy robe, whose meretricious glare
Flutters around her as a flag of sin,
Serves but to hide how great the ruin there,
While the fierce flames of Eblis prey within !

CCIII.

Edward was hindered from the only mode
Of vengeance 'tis permitted one to claim :
I mean a duel, which in honour's code
Of "satisfaction" bears the specious name :—
A curious way to *satisfy* a man,
To solder up his honour with some lead,
And soothe his wounded feelings, if you can,
By sending a small bullet through his head !

CCIV.

But Alma Mater's prudent statutes there
Did intervene, and every luckless wight
Was threatened with expulsion who should dare
With other weapons than his fists to fight.
And thus, if Edward obstinately should
Insist upon it, 'spite of college gown,
Vincent, perhaps, who was the stronger, would
(As Juan did Alphonso) knock him down.

CCV.

There have been instances, and not a few
Of battles royal 'mongst the pious sons
Of Alma Mater, though I own 'tis true,
Their blows are mostly kept for snobs and duns.
Yet I have heard of gownsmen, bold with wine,
Who their friends' eyes have black'd, or noses crush'd,
Though, to keep up their character divine,
The Dons took care the matter should be hush'd.

CCVI.

Yet 'tis considered as no more than right,
For gallant Cantabs in pot-valiant mood,
To march by hundreds on Guy Faux's night
And dip their laurels deep in snobbish blood.
Our high-born British striplings sally forth,
(Like brothel bullies) breaking limbs and pates—
The tutors smile upon their pupils' wrath,
And sometimes after hours throw wide the gates.

CCVII.

Perhaps a dozen of the daring mass,
By great exertion, manage to beat one
Unfriended tradesman, then they "floor the gas,"
And stagger home to praise the glorious fun.
Though oft'ner far a few but sturdy snobs,
By sucking gownsmen's exploits unabashed,
Put to confusion all the classic mobs,
And then the college boys get soundly thrashed.

CCVIII.

Now duelling, as every one must own,
Is an unpleasing and unchristian art,
On which, with justice, men and angels frown ;
But yet, sometimes, of right it takes the part :
Its salutary terrors oft prevent
Insults which raise the blush on woman's cheek ;
And 'tis, too often the sole argument
Which checks the bully and protects the weak.

CCIX.

At Granta, where this method's not in force
Amongst the learned youth, one's apt to hear
Terms the most brutal—language the most coarse—
Perpetually shock one's shrinking ear.
In every scene where Cantabs congregate,
“ Cheat,” “ liar,” blackguard,” rend in turns the air :
Yet all these ugly words no row create—
They're too accustomed to the sounds to care.

CCX.

To moderate, perhaps, the frequent use
Of such expressions, it might not be vain
If each rash stripling, of his gross abuse
Should at *twelve paces* the results sustain.
Tutors might cease to slander and to lie,
And beardless boys forget each useless brawl,
If they had always present to the eye
A copper cap, some powder, and a ball.

CCXI.

Away with this digression—to our tale :—
Each morn that rose beheld the sufferer's strength
Grow fainter ; and her energies did fail
So swiftly, and so surely, that at length
The village church no longer could be sought ;
Where'er she moved, all languidly she leant
Upon her mother's arm, to find support,
Whom age and love with double load thus bent.

CCXII.

No self-deception could mislead or cheat
Her friends with trusting but delusive hope,
They knew the malady had fixed its seat
Too deep for skill with such a foe to cope.
And though affection prompted their regret,
They were aware her spirit in the strife
Had suffered far too sadly to forget
Its wounds, or find a healing balm in life.

CCXIII.

No: the repentance which in God's just sight
Paid the atonement of her sinful fall,
Could ne'er the halo, beautiful and bright,
Of former purity, on earth recall.
No kind oblivion of the fatal past
Could e'er be granted in an earthly land,—
The veil to hide her errors must be cast
By a celestial, not a mortal hand.

CCXIV.

No cherished joys her future could bestow
To blot out shame and raise her drooping head ;
Scorn'd, and scarce pitied, she could never know
The blushing honours of the bridal bed.
No father's blessing, and no lover's vow,
No husband's fond and sheltering embrace,
Could ever gladden her affection now,—
No child smile recognition in her face.

CCXV.

Poor girl ! the damning mark was on her front—
The seal of reprobation, which forbade
To mourn the thought that her last great account
With her Almighty judge must soon be paid.
This world's dread sentence had pronounced her doom :
Alas ! she was a fallen angel here.
But God, whose justice finds for mercy room,
Might fix her spirit in a fairer sphere.

CCXVI.

In those celestial regions, where the songs
Of countless myriads homage pay to him
To whom dominion over all belongs,
The mighty lord of man and seraphim ;
Where the glad worship of th' angelic crew
From whose bright ranks ambitious Satan fell
Makes trembling demons, as they listen, rue
And curse the crime which lost the skies for hell.

CCXVII.

She, even she, the lost one, might aspire
To share, repentant, in those holy lays,—
To be enrolled amongst that glorious choir,
And swell the harmony of grateful praise.
Yes, the soft silver accents of that voice
Which breathed an earthly passion in th' abode
It owned on earth, shall triumph and rejoice
To celebrate the mercies of her God !

CCXVIII.

How blest those words, their balm how deeply felt !

Which tell the erring children of the dust,
That in the penitent who mourns his guilt
God hath more joy than in the sinless just.

Repentance doth unclothe th' eternal gate
To the enraptured eye of humble faith,
And the expiring Christian hails the fate
Which gives him heav'n, and points the way through
death.

CCXIX.

Yes, let her die, for she hath borne enough
Of life's sad load to welcome a release :
Weary hath been the way, the billows rough,
Then let her anchor in a port of peace.
'Twere but a cruel office to call back
Her spirit—trembling on eternity—
To tread again this dull world's beaten track,
When it would wing its flight unchecked and free.

CCXX.

She is resigned,—nay, willing to depart,
And views with joy the fast approaching end—
She doth not dread the king of terror's dart,
But hails his presence, as she would a friend.
Her mother weeps beside her, and the tears
Of her lov'd Edward scarcely are repressed—
Why do they mourn her fate? she hath no fears.
Here she is wretched, *there* she will be blest!

CCXXI.

One morn they found her, as they thought, composed
In peaceful slumber,—o'er her snowy breast
Her faded arms were crossed, her eyes were closed,
And all preserved an attitude of rest.
O'er her pale lips a radiant glorious smile
Of joy, whose source seemed scarce of earth, did gleam,
As though some pitying angel did beguile
Her sense of anguish with an heav'nly dream.

CCXXII.

Perchance, oblivious of its cruel fate
Her soul hath snatched a holiday from shame,
While fancy's wand recalls some bygone date
Of happy years, ere sin or sorrow came.
With fairy step o'er some familiar scene
A joyous child she lightly trips along,
Chasing the bee, who o'er the flowery green
Hums as he flies his low industrious song.

CCXXIII.

Perchance, she dreams of some fair Sabbath night,—
Respected epoch of her youthful age !
When, with uncovered locks of hallowed white,
Her father read the Saviour's sacred page.
When with upraised and faith-directed eyes
He placed his hand upon her cherished head,
Commending his lov'd offspring to the skies,
Ere he dismissed her to her guileless bed.

.CCXXIV.

Oh ! who can tell the varied thoughts which move
The spirit of the sleeper ? now perchance
She feels once more the first warm glow of love
Which sprang within her from the false one's glance,
Or doth imagination now renew
The moonlit scene, the streamlet, and the bow'r,
And paint with faithful and enchanting hue,
The burning ecstasies of passion's hour ?

CCXXV.

Doth she again, half shrinking, hear the lay
Of love, his accents to her young soul speak,
While o'er his bosom her wild tresses stray,
And his warm breath plays fondly on her cheek ?
Doth the soft language once again reveal
To her charm'd heart, unknown, unfancied bliss ?
Doth she once more voluptuously feel
The scorching rapture of her lover's kiss ?

CCXXVI.

No ! 'tis no dream of passion or of earth
Which rules her slumber with benignant force ;
That smile was never caused by worldly mirth,
It hath sprung forth from some far nobler source.
With cautious step the mother hath withdrawn,
Affection's vigil by the door to keep,
Lest the dear suff'rer should be haply torn
By rude disturbance from the precious sleep.

CCXXVII.

Hour upon hour hath passed, she doth not wake.
To the bedside the mother draweth near,
All tremblingly resolved that sleep to break,
Whose length and stillness chill her heart with fear.
Edward stands by her, and a glass applies
To Isabel's pale lips, but not a breath
Stains the pure mirror : then they recognize
The awful presence, not of sleep, but death !

CCXXVIII.

A folded letter lay beneath her head,
Written, 'tis probable, some weeks before ;
The seal was black, and the address they read,
Was this, " For Vincent, when I am no more."
'Twas strange to contemplate that sheet, and know
The soul which breathed through it was far away,
Ne'er to return to human thoughts below —
It ran, I fancy, something in this way.

CCXXIX.

" Stretched on the bed of sickness, ne'er to rise ;
" Destined no more to hail with grateful mirth
" The joyous air, the ever glorious skies,
" And the bright beauties of the bounteous earth :
" Crushed in my prime, and prostrate in my bloom,
" Left like an outcast in my shame t' expire.
" My world contracted to the narrow tomb,
" My conscience scarcely daring to look higher :

CCXXX.

“ Still have I energy sufficient left,
“ Though my weak fingers tremble while they write,
“ To send thee, Vincent, as a dying gift,
“ One of those locks which once were thy delight.
“ Though thou hast spurned and trampled on the love
“ Which ne’er from thee deserved that scorn unjust,
“ Perchance the humble offering may move,
“ When I have mingled with my kindred dust.

CCXXXI.

“ And though the brightness of their former hue,
“ Hath from my once fair tresses passed away ;
“ Though the poor lock which now doth meet thy view
“ At first may startle as thou mark’st the *grey*,
“ ’Tis but a type more fitting and complete,
“ Of what I *feel* ; and tells the bitter truth,
“ How guilt and sorrow, with relentless feet,
“ Have trodden down the bloom and charms of youth.

CCXXXII.

“I have forgiv’n thee the cruel deed ;
“ My pardon is complete, bear witness heav’n !
“ ’Twould ill become me to resent who need,
“ Myself, alas ! so much to be forgiv’n.
“ Let these few lines I trace to thee attest,
“ Now, when life’s dreary part’s about to cease,
“ That the last words thy victim hath addressed
“ To her destroyer, are the words of peace.

CCXXXIII.

“ Oh ! thou hast wronged me, Vincent, deeply wronged ;
“ Thy hand at once remorselessly o’erthrew
“ The fairest fabric which to age belonged,
“ And killed the rose of youth which by it grew.
“ I might have borne each deadly wound that gushed
“ From my pierced heart in passion’s fatal strife,
“ Had I but fallen alone, but thou hast crushed
“ The father’s reason, and the daughter’s life !

CCXXXIV.

“ Years could not ever from my mind erase,
“ Ages of torture could not expiate,
“ That old grey-headed man’s unconscious gaze,
“ Which ‘made no sign’ of wrath, or love or hate.
“ To die, as I am dying, in the spring
“ Of life, an early sepulchre to find,
“ Is not so fearful or so withering
“ As that annihilation of the mind !

CCXXXV.

“ Oh ! when that vacant glance upon me fell,
“ When my vain prayers that idiot smile drew forth,
“ My bosom raged as with a living hell,
“ And owned th’ Almighty’s guilt-avenging wrath.
“ Then did I hope that God in mercy might,
“ Like *his* throw down my reason from her throne,
“ That I might meet, unmoved, the blasting sight,
“ And smile unshrinking on the deed I’d done !

CCXXXVI.

“ Fare thee well, Vincent, may'st thou never know,
“ In the glad progress of thy future days,
“ As I have known, unutterable woe,
“ Nor feel remorse, that worm which ever preys.
“ May the wild passions of thy stormy youth
“ Sink at the voice of virtue to a calm,
“ Oh ! may'st thou never break thy plighted truth,
“ Inflicting wounds which know no cure, no balm.

CCXXXVII.

“ And should some tender and devoted maid,
“ To thee her young heart's homage offer up,
“ Then think of me, thy perfidy betrayed,
“ And do not fill with bitterness *her* cup.
“ *One* victim to the wilderness was sent,
“ To make atonement for a nation's sin ;
“ Then be my fate sufficient to prevent
“ The fall of others, and exemption win.

CCXXXVIII.

“ Believe me, woman, though a feeble thing,
“ Yet hides beneath that feebleness a heart
“ Which love can gladden, cruelty can wring,
“ As exquisitely, as man’s sterner part :
“ From the soft chords of feeling in her breast,
“ A tender hand sweet music may awake,
“ While, by the careless finger rudely prest,
“ They breathe a plaintive melody and break.

CCXXXIX.

“ Remember too, kind Heaven her charms bestowed,
“ To soothe man’s troubles in his weary race ;
“ Surely, some fairer recompense was owed
“ To her devoted fondness, than disgrace.
“ Your toils ensnare, your arts with skill hunt down,
“ Woman defenceless, trusting, and forlorn ;
“ Ye shun the savage lion’s dreaded frown,
“ But pierce the timid, unprotected fawn.

CCXL.

“ Think, when thou readest these few lines, that she
“ Whose hand hath traced them, is no longer here,
“ But to the regions of eternity
“ Hath found a passage from her early bier.
“ And should thy haughty pride with anger rise,
“ As these last counsels of her love are read,
“ Think of the tomb where Isabel then lies,
“ And do not curse the memory of the dead.

CCXLI.

“ Farewell! my weakness bids me write the word,
“ Farewell for ever ! or at least on earth.
“ Yet if the prayer of penitence be heard,
“ If sinners' tears in heaven be held of worth,
“ Still shall my spirit, from its home above,
“ Watch o'er thy life with ever wakeful eye ;
“ And as to thee on earth belonged my love,
“ For thee it still shall flourish in the sky.”

THE END.

NOTES.

NOTE (1.)

“ And Hy**rs got particularly d—d.”

An examiner celebrated for his severity. He was once known to set a problem which it had taken him *six* hours to resolve himself. He is of low extraction, (his connexions are petty farmers in Essex) and his aspect and manners do not belie his origin.

NOTE (2.)

“ Merely to gain a pair of leading strings.”

The principal difference between the under-graduate's gown and that of the B.A., is simply the addition of *a pair of strings* to the latter.

NOTE (3.)

“ And shocked those “ Sims” who never went astray.”

Followers of the late Rev. Charles Simeon, the celebrated evangelical preacher at Cambridge. The doctrines he promulgated (erroneously perhaps, but at least conscientiously,) have been strangely distorted by his idiotic disciples, who devote to eternal torments all who do not, like themselves, follow a childish course of puritanical piety, hypocrisy and humbug.

ERRATA.

Stanza X. line 7, for "to have stol'n," read "t' have stol'n."

Stanza XXXVI. line 2, for "carreer," read "career."

Stanza LXXXIII. line 8, for "H—rs," read "Hy^{as}rs."

Stanza LXXXIV. line 2, for "the day of taking of degrees," read "the day for taking of degrees."

Stanza XCV. line 3, for "Ye blessed us in a soft embrace," read "Ye blessed us—in a soft embrace."

Stanza CX. line 5, for "that friends are like them," read "that friends were like them."

Stanza CLXXVIII. line 6, for "new," read "knew."

Stanza CXXVII. line 3, for "all tremblingly resolved," etc. read "all tremblingly, resolved," etc.

Shortly will appear,

THE LEGEND OF

COUNT EGMONT'S BRIDAL,

AND

Other Poems.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "GRANTA."

